**Benefits of Teacher and School Librarian Collaboration among Stakeholders**

The research-based articles and stakeholders testimonials offer a plethora of benefits to teacher and school librarian collaboration. From the standpoint of a classroom teacher, the school librarian offers opportunities to assist in developing, selecting, and administering assessment tools with shared accountability of student performance. Zmuda's article states that, "While measures of external accountability have reframed public debate on education, external accountability cannot save a system in which staff members work in isolation from one another” (29). High-stakes testing and accountability have placed added pressure on classroom teachers for their students to perform well on assessment. Because school librarians are designated to serve as instructional partners working with teachers to design instruction and teach information skills along with the curriculum, it is logical to expect that there be shared responsibility for the assessment as this is a part of the lesson design. By having another professional to guide and support during the assessment process, the pressure on the classroom teacher is somewhat lessened. Furthermore, "as partners in teaching, learning specialists must work with teachers to provide collective evidence of the learning that results from their combined instruction” (Zmuda 29).  
 By serving as an instructional partner, the school librarian reaps the benefits of increased personal satisfaction and motivation. Teaching together allows professionals to improve their practice as they are able to learn from one another. The school librarian is able to expand her knowledge of the curriculum content while utilizing her expertise in information literacy skills. "Such morale-boosting outcomes almost certainly will contribute significantly to the motivation for future collaboration and may influence other people who observed these effects to become participants in collaboration when the opportunity arises" (McWilliams 27). In addition, the school librarian has an opportunity to play a vital role in building, nurturing, and sustaining collaborative relationships with everyone in the school community. Challenging as it may seem, identifying common goals and being sensitive to the needs of the school is paramount. The importance of developing collaborative partners with teachers is linked to an effective school library media program and academic achievement. McGregor's article states that "Teacher librarians should move from the role of support to one of intervention in learning (201)." The purpose of this collaboration should be linked to a focus on student learning; real-world connections, as we prepare our students for 21st century job related skills; integrating school goals and initiatives; and ongoing inquiry and reflection. The librarian must be knowledgeable and resourceful in all subject areas, having a global vision in place, to effectively teach and lead from an instructional standpoint.

Students benefit from collaboration in that their levels of both information literacy and subject content knowledge are deepened (McWilliams 27) while receiving “individualized attention” as mentioned in Peggy’s testimonial (Kindergarten teacher). Judy explains in her video testimonial, “in-depth teaching and complexity of the curriculum can occur” (Third-grade teacher). Co-teachers can more readily meet the needs of all students by differentiating instruction, team teaching, and teaching different groups simultaneously. Students who need re-mediation or re-teaching can be taught in a small group while the other students are taught the next level of instruction. One teacher can perform a demonstration or model the use of a technology application at the front of the classroom while the instructional partner moves throughout the classroom to assist students perform the task. As students receive individualized attention and learn the curriculum at higher levels of rigor and complexity, student outcomes are improved which results in higher student achievement.

School administrators like Paula can appreciate the “global perspective of the building” that the school librarian offers through collaboration.

Collaboration can be challenging, and as mentioned in the article by McGregor, "It can't operate in isolation. However, district policies can have an effect on how easily, or challenging, developing a collaborative community for the sake of the students. Other challenges presented are those teachers who are resistant to change, and for the most part, it is always how that change is presented, than the change itself. "Change is a journey, not a blueprint (McGregor 204). The teacher-librarian should extend the need for change, but it should not be led alone. Audrey Church states that the "Principal serve as instructional leaders of their schools by establishing the climate, expectations, and priorities for effective teaching and student learning (1)." It is the principal who must see the library as an integral part of the instructional program, but it is the librarian who must promote the library program by showing personal commitment, affirming its value, and modeling library use to students, parents, teachers, school community. This is due to a lack of awareness within the school community, thus presenting a lack of understanding for the need of collaboration (6). Kimmel identifies the stereotypes of the school librarian that still resound with classroom teachers who refer to them as helpers, gatekeepers, and specialists. “We still have much more work to do (and more noise to make) to gain recognition for ‘real school librarians’ as defined in *Empowering Learners* as co-teachers who are leaders with a particular knowledge of curriculum and instructional design, not story ladies whispering ‘shhhh’ and covering classes to provide teachers release time (Kimmel 11).

The research on teacher-librarian collaboration discussed has lead me to wonder how much of on an impact on student achievement it really has. It appears through my investigation, that there is little research in this field which shows data comparing student achievement with and without collaboration. This type of research may be powerful in motivating school administrators to accept the instructional partner role of school librarians and work to provide flexible scheduling and planning time with teachers. Because time constraints are an on-going issue for collaboration, we must continue to work with our administrators to find creative ways to communicate about lesson plan development.

Works Cited